

REMARKS

1. Reconsideration and further prosecution of the above-identified application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and discussion that follows.

Claims 25-42 are now pending in this application. Claims 1-24 have been canceled.

Independent claims 25, 29, 36, and 42 are limited to a method (and apparatus) for "protecting a semiconductor device from damage during processing". Support for this limitation may be found at page 2, lines 20-23 of the specification.

Independent claims 25, 29, 36 and 42 are also further limited to "a semiconductor wafer". Specific reference to a wafer and to the processing of the wafer may be found at page 5, line 9 to page 6, line 7 and FIG. 5 of the specification.

Independent claim 25 is further limited to "providing a plurality of active semiconductor devices on the surface of the wafer wherein each active device is separated from other active devices by inactive semiconductor areas not including an active semiconductor device", claim 29 is further limited to "providing a plurality of semiconductor chips on the surface of the wafer where each semiconductor chip includes an active area bounded by inactive semiconductor areas not including an active semiconductor device" and 36 is further limited to "providing a semiconductor chip on the surface of the wafer where the semiconductor chip includes an active area with inactive semiconductor areas disposed on opposing sides of the active area and where the inactive semiconductor areas do not include an active semiconductor device". Claim 42 has

similar limitations. The provision of a multitude of chips on a semiconductor wafer is supported at page 1, lines 16-17. The separation of active devices by inactive areas is inherently disclosed by the inactive areas 412 shown on the outside of the chip 400 that would function to separate the active areas of adjacent active devices while in wafer form.

Claim 25 is also limited to "dicing the wafer into a plurality of die". Claim 42 is limited to "means for separating". Support for dicing may be found in the general knowledge of those of skill in the art and the fact that wafers would necessarily be diced to divide the wafer into chips. Since a person of skill in the art would know that wafers must be divided into chips, the specification inherently discloses dicing.

Claim 25 is limited to "removing a die from the wafer using a pick and place tool such that the pick and place tool only makes contact with the pads surrounding the active devices of the wafer thereby reducing the likelihood of contact with the active device", claim 29 to "removing a semiconductor chip of the at least some semiconductor chips from the wafer using a pick and place tool such that the pick and place tool only makes contact with the pads surrounding the active area of the semiconductor chip thereby reducing the likelihood of contact with the active area" and claim 36 to "removing the semiconductor chip from the wafer using a pick and place tool such that the pick and place tool only makes contact with the pads surrounding the active area of the semiconductor chip thereby reducing the likelihood of contact with the active area". Claim 42 has similar limitations. Support for these limitations may be found at page 3, lines 5-12 of the specification.

Claims 1-24 (now canceled) had been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 or §103 as unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,375,364 to Wu and U.S. Pat. No. 6,574,379 to Miyazaki. However, neither Wu or Miyazaki provide any teaching or suggestion of methods for protecting semiconductor devices during processing. Accordingly, the claimed invention is now clear differentiated from the cited patents and the rejections should be withdrawn.

2. Allowance of claims 24-42, as now presented, is believed to be in order and such action is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of the subject application, he is respectfully requested to telephone applicant's undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,
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October 5, 2005
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